

State Recreational Trails Program

Background

During the 1987 Legislative Session, the General Assembly enacted HF 575 (Recreational Trails Act) that created the State Recreational Trails Program, now codified in [Iowa Code chapter 465B](#). The intent of the General Assembly was for the State to acquire and develop 2,000 miles of new recreational trails and complete the existing trails before the year 2000. As of 2012, the Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates the trail system to be approximately 1,505 miles. This includes developed multiuse recreational trails and off-road paths throughout the State, but does not include any of the trails owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in State parks.

There are other funding sources for trails in addition to the State Recreational Trails Program. For example, the DOT administers three main trail programs that provide funding for trail development, including the State Recreational Trails Program, the federal Recreational Trails Program, and the federal Transportation Enhancement Program. The DNR also administers programs and provides grants through resources such as the Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund and the snowmobile and all-terrain vehicles grant programs. In addition, in accordance with [Iowa Code section 461.37](#), trails will receive 10.0% of the recently created Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund that the DNR administers. Funding for trails is also available through grant programs such as the Community Attraction and Tourism Program under the Iowa Economic Development Authority. This **Fiscal Topic** focuses solely on the State Recreational Trails Program under the DOT.

State Funding History

During the 1988 Legislative Session, the General Assembly enacted SF 2196 (Gas Tax, Highways, Transportation Funding Act) that provided an annual allocation of \$1.0 million from the Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) under [Iowa Code section 312.2](#) for the development of recreational trails. Funding from the RUTF was provided from FY 1989 to FY 1996.

During the 1996 Legislative Session, the General Assembly enacted HF 2421 (FY 1997 Transportation, Infrastructure, and Capitals Appropriations Act) that eliminated the allocation from the RUTF and began funding the State Recreational Trails Program from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) via the annual infrastructure budget. The initial RIIF appropriation was \$1.0 million for FY 1997.

Funding has been provided consistently since the Program's inception. However, in FY 2002, during a period of decline in General Fund revenues, the State transferred \$5.5 million from the balance in the State Recreational Trails Fund to the General Fund. The General Assembly did not appropriate funds for the Program in FY 2005 and FY 2011. Funding for trails during FY 2011 was offset by the use of approximately \$12.0 million for trail development from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds received in FY 2010, in addition to the usual federal funding. Trail projects receiving ARRA funding went through the DOT federal trail programs and are not reflected in the State Recreational Trails Program funding history.

Funding for trails in the infrastructure budget has been provided at varying levels from the RIIF and other infrastructure funds, including the Restricted Capital Fund (RCF) and the Endowment for Iowa's Health Restricted Capitals Fund (RC2). Between FY 1997 and FY 2013, appropriations to the DOT for the State Recreational Trails Program totaled \$31.0 million, averaging \$1.8 million annually for those years. This amount includes two fiscal years, FY 1998 and FY 1999, when \$1.0 million was appropriated each year for completion of trail connections between existing trails and parks within the system. **Table 1** on the following page illustrates funding provided to the DOT for the State Recreational Trails Program for the period of FY 2007 through FY 2013.

More Information

Department of Transportation – Office of Systems Planning Federal and State Recreational Trails Programs:
http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/fedstate_rectrails.htm

Department of Transportation – Iowa Bikes and Trails home page: <http://www.iowadot.gov/iowabikes/index.html>

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation – Iowa Trails: <http://www.inhf.org/iowa-trails.cfm>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

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State Recreational Trails Program

State Recreational Trails Program Grants

Grants funded through the State Recreational Trails Program require a minimum local match of 25.0%. Trails that receive funding must be maintained for public use for a minimum of 20 years. State and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Applications for funding are submitted to the DOT Office of Systems Planning. The DOT provides recommendations for projects to the Transportation Commission for approval.

Funding requests generally exceed the available resources. For the FY 2013 funding cycle, the DOT received a total of 40 applications requesting a total amount of \$15.6 million. During some fiscal years, the General Assembly has directed a portion of the funding for specified projects. For example, in FY 2007, an earmark of \$200,000 was provided for one project representing 10.0% of the appropriation. In FY 2008, earmarks totaled \$415,000 for three projects, or 20.8% of the appropriation. In FY 2009, approximately 39.3% of the appropriation was earmarked for six projects. In FY 2010, approximately 35.7% of the appropriation was earmarked for two projects. When projects receive earmarks, they bypass the normal application and approval process by the Transportation Commission. The General Assembly did not make any specific earmarks for the FY 2012 and FY 2013 appropriations. **Table 2** shows the projects receiving grants for the period of FY 2009 through FY 2013.

Table 1
State Appropriations to the Department of Transportation for Recreational Trails Funding
FY 2007 to FY 2013

	Actual FY 2007	Actual FY 2008	Actual FY 2009	Actual FY 2010	Actual FY 2011	Actual FY 2012	Estimated FY 2013
Recreational Trails Funding - State Source							
RIIF - Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund	\$ 0	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 0	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000
RC2 - Endowment for Iowa's Health Restricted Capitals Fund	2,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 0	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000

Table 2
State Recreational Trails Program Grants FY 2009 to FY 2013¹

<u>State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2009</u>	<u>State Grant</u>	<u>State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2010</u>	<u>State Grant</u>
Linn Creek Trail Connection with Iowa Hwy 330 Trail (Marshall County)	\$ 800,000	Principal Riverwalk (Des Moines) ²	\$ 750,000
Principal Riverwalk (Des Moines) ²	750,000	Mississippi River Bike Trail (Allamakee County)	750,000
Garlock Slough Recreational Trail (West Okoboji and Dickinson County)	490,162	Railbanking Purchase of IANW Railroad (Dickinson County)	525,000
Mississippi River Trail - Liberty Avenue Connection (Clinton)	351,750	Pinicon Ridge Trail Bridge Wapsipinicon River (Linn County) ²	500,000
Trout Run Trail (Decorah and Winneshiek County)	138,088	Raccoon River Valley Trail Addition Herndon to Waukee	484,995
American Gothic Regional Trail (Ottumwa and Fairfield) ²	100,000	Trout Run Trail - Box Culverts and Bridge (Decorah/Winneshiek County)	300,000
Maquoketa River Water Trail (Jones County) ²	100,000	Iowa River Corridor Trail Connection Sand Lake (Iowa City)	281,000
Stone State Park Trail (Woodbury County) ²	100,000	Iowa DNR AmeriCorps Trail Crew ³	262,500
Summerset Trail - (Indianola, Carlisle, Des Moines) ²	100,000	Cedar Valley Nature Trail Bridge (Black Hawk County) ³	250,000
Riverview Recreation Area expansion (Black Hawk County)	40,000	Lewis and Clark Historic Riverfront Trail (Sioux City)	128,000
Crawford County Trail ²	30,000	Summerset Trail Flood Repairs (Warren County) ³	107,271
Total FY 2009	\$ 3,000,000	Trout Run Trail - Fish Hatchery Interpretive Center Restroom Facility	75,000
		Des Moines River Regional Trail, Phase I	73,474
		Total FY 2010⁴	\$ 4,487,240
<u>State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2012</u>	<u>State Grant</u>	<u>State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2013</u>	<u>State Grant</u>
Central Iowa Trail Loop - Chichaqua Valley to Gay Lea Wilson (Polk County)	\$ 753,750	Shaulis Road Trail Extension - Phase 1 (Waterloo)	\$ 706,500
Gray's Lake Connecting Trail and SW 14th St Quiet Corridor (Des Moines)	439,920	Fayette-Volga River Multi-Use Trail (Upper Iowa University and Fayette)	700,000
Cedar Valley Nature Trail Bridge (Black Hawk County)	396,516	Iowa River Trail - Final Phase (Iowa City)	441,000
Iowa DNR Trails Program (Iowa DNR)	262,500	Mississippi River Trail Final Connection (Clinton)	400,000
Turkey River Recreational Corridor Trail-Elkader to Motor Mill (Clayton County)	250,000	Musser Park to Wiggins Road Trail (Muscatine)	300,000
Gypsum City OHV Park (Webster County)	211,500	South Troy Park Trail (Robins)	204,000
NW Beaver Drive Trail (Johnston)	181,464	Mines of Spain Trail and Trailhead (Dubuque and Iowa DNR)	170,500
Water Trails Planning Design & Construction Activities 2011-2013 (Iowa DNR)	120,000	Brushy Creek All Weather Multi-Use Lake Trail Bridge (Iowa DNR)	78,000
Dickinson County Spine Trail - Henderson Woods to US 71 Arnolds Park	115,850	Total FY 2013⁵	\$ 3,000,000
Buffalo to Wild Cat Den Road - Mississippi River Trail (Buffalo)	108,500		
Bee Branch Creek Trail - MRT Route (Dubuque)	100,000		
Bluff Creek OHV Park Development Plan (Iowa DNR)	60,000		
Total FY 2012	\$ 3,000,000		

¹ Funding not received in FY 2011.

² Earmarked projects in legislation.

³ Flood-related projects.

⁴ Total for FY 2010 includes \$987,240 that reverted from projects not completed or that had cost underruns.

⁵ Projects for FY 2013 are as recommended to the Transportation Commission in September 2012. Action on the projects is anticipated by the Commission in October 2012.